

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

TO: Alabama Senate and House of Representatives

FROM: Paula Scout McCaleb, Executive Director

Date: April 18, 2006

RE: Annual Report

Pursuant, §34-17A-24, Code of Alabama, 1975, the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy is required to make an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature. Therefore, this information is posted and updated annually on the ABEMFT Web Site in order to reduce costs.

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy Act (Act #97-170) is enacted to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare, and to assure the availability of high quality marriage and family therapy services to persons in need of such services.

HB 518 which addressed housekeeping items that the board discovered to be lacking in existing statute during the first few years of operation was passed on April 17, 2006 and is now awaiting the Governor's signature. This is the first amendment to the enabling statute passed eight years ago. The ABEMFT is very grateful for your work on this legislation that will provide the Board with the tools to provide more services to Alabama citizens.

The board has approximately 201 licensees and meets quarterly to conduct board business. The law, rules and regulations, forms including a consumer complaint form, and a roster of licensees is available on this web site. Also, the board publishes an annual newsletter and sends broadcast e-mails to licensees to keep licensees informed on all ABEMFT business and issues. The Board is now working with Alabama Interactive to provide for on-line renewals by this year's renewal period. Computer Based Testing is used in order to provide convenience to applicants by providing testing centers across the state and more opportunities to take the examination.

The Marriage and Family Therapy Board Fund is provided by license fees submitted to the Board (license fees are biennial). This fund is intended to allow for the Board's continuation in a manner that safeguards the public interest and provides services to licensees. The Board utilizes contracts for Management Services and Legal Counsel on an as needed basis in order in order to keep operating expenses at a minimum.

The board consists of five members. Of the 5 members currently serving, (2) are female, (3) are male and (1) is a minority. To the extent possible, the board reflects the geographic, gender, and racial diversity of the state as a whole. The board is further composed of one (1) MFT Educator, one (1) Public Member, and three (3) Practicing Members as required by statute. The Board is currently awaiting two appointments to be made by the Governor for the MFT Educator position and the Public Member position. Recommendations for appointments have been made by the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Therapy as authorized under statute.

This year the Board invited the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Therapy to have the first of now annual discussions. The Board enjoys a good relationship with the Association and looks forward to the continued development of this relationship in the future.